

King County, Washington
NFIP Number: 530071
Community Rating System Recertification Evaluation Report

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to evaluate King County's progress in implementing the 10-year action plan and recommendations contained in the 2006 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan. This report is prepared to meet the requirements of the Community Rating System (CRS) Activity 514g. This evaluation report covers the period from January 2007, when the 2006 Flood Hazard Management Plan was adopted, through June 2008.

Report Preparation and Distribution

This evaluation report was prepared by staff from the King County River and Floodplain Management Unit (RFMU) within the Water and Land resources Division of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks. The 2006 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan serves as the comprehensive plan for the King County Flood Control Zone District. The RFMU is responsible for implementing flood hazard management programs and projects, staffing the Advisory and Basin Technical Committees of the KCFCZD, providing technical assistance to cities and reporting progress back to the KCFCZD's Board of Supervisors, Advisory Committees and basin technical committees.

The King County Executive transmitted the King County Flood Control Zone District (KCFCZD) Scope of Services Quarterly Reports for the first and second quarters of 2008 to the KCFCZD Board of Supervisors consistent with the Inter-Local Agreement (ILA) between King County and the KCFCZD. A copy of this recertification evaluation report and these KCFCZD quarterly reports are available at the following web site:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/flooding/community-rating-system.aspx>

Evaluation of the Action Plan

During the reporting period King County's flood protection capital program concentrated on two fundamental flood risk reduction needs: (1) emergency repairs from the November 2006 presidentially-declared disaster and (2) increased funding to address a backlog of capital projects through the newly authorized King County Flood Control Zone District.

Emergency Repairs

King County partnered with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) to complete emergency repairs to the Briscoe School Levee in Kent, Washington. Rehabilitation of this flood facility was identified as a high priority in the 2006 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan, and the weakened condition of the levee was exacerbated by several days of high flows in November 2006, when King County flood patrols noticed a set of parallel cracks running for about 400-feet across the top of the levee, along with a 100-foot-long slump along the lower slope on the river side of the levee. Once the floodwaters

receded, engineers analyzed the damage and determined that the deep-seated slump would likely continue to worsen, compromising the integrity of the flood-protection structure. Between June and October, 2007, King County worked with the USACOE to reconstruct the facility, including setting back the levee to reduce the slope and increase the stability of the structure, reconstruction of the levee toe, and addition of large wood at the base of the facility to stabilize the structure and provide habitat for fish species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act.

A USACOE economic evaluation for the project said the properties protected by this levee extend at least two miles east of the right bank and 2-1/2 miles north (downstream) of the work area. This commercial area of more than five square miles contains about 500 light manufacturing, warehouses and distribution facilities. The levee also protects numerous roads that provide transportation access between Auburn, Kent, and Renton, and utilities that supply gas and electricity to the many businesses.

The total cost to repair the damaged levee was approximately \$835,000. King County provided \$370,000 for the repair work, and the USACOE contributed \$465,000.

King County Flood Control Zone District

On April, 16 2007, the Metropolitan King County Council passed Ordinance No. 15728, creating a countywide flood control zone district, in accordance with chapter 86.15 RCW. Consistent with State law, the Ordinance dissolved existing flood control zone districts within the County and appointed a 15-person Advisory Committee to advise the Board of Supervisors of the District. Under chapter 86.15, the Board of Supervisors is comprised of the members of the County Council.

The Advisory Committee met four times during the spring and summer of 2007 to review information on the District's proposed capital and operating work program, as well as alternatives for funding flood protection efforts in King County. The Advisory Committee's deliberations were supported by staff-level Basin Technical Committees (BTCs) in each of the five major river basins within King County. Staff from all jurisdictions in King County were invited to participate in these meetings. The BTCs first met in March of 2007 in advance of the Advisory Committee's schedule, and reviewed, analyzed and provided input on the following:

- basin-specific information on flooding problems identified in the adopted 2006 Flood Hazard Management Plan (2006 Flood Plan),
- proposed capital projects identified in the 2006 Flood Plan to address these problems,
- criteria used to identify, prioritize and sequence projects (based on policies contained in the 2006 Flood Plan), and
- proposed rankings for capital projects.

Several "temperature read" votes occurred at Advisory Committee meetings in June 2007. In a round robin format, committee members indicated their early opinions about the proposed list of projects, the appropriate levy rate to fund flood protection needs, and whether the rate

should be uniform or tiered throughout the County. This early voting mechanism enabled all of the members, as well as King County staff, to note where there were areas of support, concerns, or questions that needed to be answered. This was also a way for all of the members to more thoroughly understand each others' interests and perspectives.

The initial meetings of the Advisory Committee were the beginning of an ongoing process, since the committee is mandated to make annual recommendations to the District Board of Supervisors. Committee members recognized the need to respond to the urgent public safety threat posed by the state of flood facilities in King County and took very seriously their role of providing the Board of Supervisors with 'expert policy advice' on flood protection issues. Over the course of just over two months, the Advisory Committee reviewed significant amounts of information to make the following recommendations for 2008:

- The Advisory Committee overwhelmingly approved the District's proposed work plan.
- The Advisory Committee overwhelmingly supported the evaluation of capital projects as part of the same prioritization and sequencing process and agreed that a separate "subregional" project category was not necessary.
- The Advisory Committee strongly supported a levy rate of 10 cents/\$1,000 AV for 2008 to begin implementing the recommended work plan.
- The Advisory Committee was split on whether study of a multi-tiered funding structure should occur in 2008.

In November 2007 the District Board of Supervisors acted on the Advisory Committee's recommendations by adopting the 2008 work program, and approving a 10-cent per \$1000 assessed value levy to generate revenue of approximately \$34 million per year, with approximately 85% of funds targeted at high priority flood protection capital projects. The Board also specified that 10% of revenues should go toward a 'Subregional Opportunity fund' and directed the Advisory Committee to define an allocation process during 2008.

Implementation of the District's ambitious capital program began in January 2008. After years of funding two to three capital projects per year, increased funding enabled King County staff to implement 55 projects on behalf of the District, including flood damage repairs, flood facility rehabilitations, acquisition of flood-prone homes, elevation of at-risk structures, and technical studies necessary to develop future capital projects. King County leveraged District resources by partnering with the Corps of Engineers on nine flood damage repairs with \$17 million in federal funding, as well as approximately twenty grants from various local, state, and federal funding sources. While most capital project construction began in July 2008 outside the reporting window, five flood damage repairs were completed on the Snoqualmie and Raging Rivers during June 2008.

Beginning in January 2008 the BTCs reconvened to develop recommendations for the 2009 work program. The Advisory Committee met three times during April and May 2008 to

review and provide input on the Subregional Opportunity Fund, capital project evaluation factors, and the proposed 2009 work program. In order to complete their work, committee members heard presentations from King County staff; engaged in group discussions; received input from members of the Basin Technical Committees (BTCs), participated in staff briefings; and conducted preliminary “temperature read” votes that allowed the members to better understand each others’ interests and perspectives.

The Advisory Committee’s recommendations for the 2009 work program and budget are as follows:

- The Advisory Committee provided the following unanimous recommendations for the Subregional Opportunity Fund:
 - 1) The 10-Percent Subregional Opportunity Fund should be allocated to jurisdictions on a pro rated basis.
 - 2) Jurisdictions should have flexibility to determine which types of activities they wish to finance with these funds, so long as those activities are consistent with RCW 86.15.
 - 3) Jurisdictions should have flexibility to determine where these funded projects should be located.
- The Advisory Committee recommended that “regional economic benefits” be added as one of the criteria for project prioritization and that specific implementation factors be used to prioritize projects.
- The Advisory Committee unanimously recommended a 2009 work program and budget.
- The Advisory Committee made an informal recommendation that the KCFCZD Board establish a policy guiding the appropriate use of condemnation authority to ensure that high-priority public safety projects providing regional benefits are not stymied by recalcitrant owners.

The Advisory Committee’s recommendations will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors in August 2008, and the Committee is scheduled to meet in October to review King County’s progress implementing capital projects during the 2008 construction season.